

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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R 051455Z MAR 76

FM AMCONSUL STUTTGART

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2823

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

USMISSION USBERLIN

AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL MUNICH

HQUSEUCOM VAIHINGEN

HQUSAREUR HEIDELBERG

UNCLAS STUTTGART 317

FOR POLADS

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT GW

SUBJ: BANGEMANN QUIZZED BY PRESS AND PUBLIC

REF: STUTTGART 221, STUTTGART 296

1. SUMMARY: BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG FDP LAND CHAIRMAN MARIN BANGEMANN FACED THE PRESS AND PUBLIC AT THE STUTTGARTER NACHRICHTEN TREFFPUNKT FOYER MARCH 3. AILING FDP LANDTAG FACTION CHAIRMAN BRANDENBURG UNABLE TO PARTICIPATE. QUESTIONS REFLECT GREATER INTEREST IN BANGEMANN'S NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN ROLES THAN HIS IMPACT ON LAND POLITICAL SCENE. GOES OVER OLD GROUND ON COALITION POSSIBILITIES AND POINTS UP DIFFERENCES WITH BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG SPD. END SUMMARY.

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2. MARCH 3 STUTTGARTER NACHRICHTEN TREFFPUNKT FOYER PROGRAM

FEATURED BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG FDP LAND CHAIRMAN MARTIN BANGEMANN. POPULAR BUT AGING AND AILING FDP LANDTAG FACTION CHAIRMAN JOHANN PETER BRANDENBURG (71) UNABLE TO APPEAR AS SCHEDULED WITH BANGEMANN. BANGEMANN'S CONTROVERSIAL NATIONAL ROLE AND INTERESTS CLEARLY DETRACTED FROM FOCUS ON UPCOMING APRIL 4 LANDTAG ELECTIONS.

3. QUESTIONERS DEVOTED CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION TO CONTROVERSIAL PAST BANGEMANN STATEMENTS ON VARIOUS COALITION POSSIBILITIES AMONG MAJOR PARTIES IN FRG AND THE IMPACT IT MIGHT HAVE ON HIS FUTURE. HE GAVE HIS STANDARD AND WELL-KNOWN ANSWERS WHILE REFUSING TO AGREE THAT HE HAD SUFFERED A MAJOR PERSONAL POLITICAL DEFEAT ON THAT ISSUE. HE ALSO SAID IT STILL NOT CERTAIN WHETHER HE WOULD SEEK REELECTION AS BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG FDP LAND CHAIRMAN AT 1977 THREE KINGS MEETING. REFUSED TO BE DRAWN INTO SPECULATION ABOUT POSSIBLE SUCCESSOR SAYING ALL THOSE WHO MIGHT SUCCEED HIM WOULD NOT BE CATASTROPHIC FOR THE PARTY.

4. BANGEMANN, HOWEVER, WAS DRAWN INTO SOMEWHAT GREATER DETAIL ON CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE COALITION QUESTION. HE DEFENDED THE BONN SPD/FDP COALITION AND IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION ABOUT GOVERNING AFTER THE BUNDESTAG ELECTION HE CONCEDED A VERY NARROW MAJORITY WOULD MAKE GOVERNING MORE DIFFICULT, BUT ONE COULD NOT OPPORTUNISTICALLY MAKE A COALITION DECISION DEPENDENT UPON THE EXPECTED SIZE OF THE VOTE. HE ADMITTED THAT THE "VERY SUCCESS" OF THE COALITION HAD REDUCED THE NUMBER OF UNSOLVED PROBLEMS. CONTINUING THE CURRENT COALITION WAS PERFECTLY JUSTIFIED, BUT THIS DID NOT MEAN IN THE LONG RUN THAT IT WAS NECESSARILY THE BEST OF ALL COALITION POSSIBILITIES.

5. BANGEMANN SAID THAT FDP HAD OVERALL VOTE GETTING POTENTIAL OF ABOUT 20 PERCENT WHICH WAS ABOUT TWICE AS MUCH AS THE PARTY COULD REALISTICALLY EXPECT. HE BELIEVED THAT PARTY WOULD CONTINUE AS A POTENT POLITICAL FORCE AS LONG AS IT KEPT FAITH WITH THE FAITHFUL.

6. IN RESPONSE TO DIRECT QUERY AS TO WHY MORE PEOPLE SHOULD VOTE FOR THE FDP IN THE LANDTAG ELECTIONS, BANGEMANN LISTED

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SOME OF WHAT HE CLAIMED TO BE THE BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG FDP'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS. HE BOASTED OF THE PARTY'S OPPOSITION ROLE IN HELPING TO KEEP THE LAND GOVERNMENT IN LINE AND SPECIFICALLY CITED EDUCATION, TRAFFIC, AND SOCIAL AREAS BUT WITH LITTLE CONVINCING SUPPORTING EVIDENCE.

7. REGARDING BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG SPD, BANGEMANN SAID IT THE KEY TO BREAKING THE CDU LAND MAJORITY. HE ADDED THAT IT NO

SECRET THAT HE WAS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FROM BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG SPD LAND CHAIRMAN ERHARD EPPLER. BANGEMANN ALSO SAID IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG SPD AND FDP WAS NOT AS GOOD AS IN OTHER LAENDER AND CITED NORTHRHINE-WESTPHALIA AS ONE EXAMPLE. THERE WERE ALSO POTENTIAL PROBLEM AREAS BETWEEN THE BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG OPPOSITION PARTIES AND INDICATED DIFFERENCES ON ECONOMIC POLICY AS ONE SUBJECT THAT COULD CREATE DIFFICULTIES.

8. COMMENT: FACT THAT BRANDENBURG SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN ON PLATFORM WITH BANGEMANN IS REFLECTION OF FACT THAT LETTER HAS NOT BEEN HEAVILY INVOLVED IN LAND POLITICS RECENTLY AND THAT HIS PRESENCE WAS TO BE BALANCED BY THAT OF BRANDENBURG, ONE OF THE FEW REMAINING GRAND OLD MEN OF BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG LIBERALISM. UNCERTAINTY EXPRESSED BY BANGEMANN RE FUTURE AS BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG FDP LAND CHAIRMAN MAY ALSO BE HINT THAT HIS PREFERENCE AND INTERESTS ARE MORE IN EUROPEAN MOVEMENT THAN IN LAND POLITICS. CONTINUED INTEREST IN AND SPECULATION ABOUT THE FDP'S COALITION POSSIBILITIES IS A CLEAR INDICATION THAT THE LAST WORD IS FAR FROM BEING SAID ON THAT SUBJECT, PARTICULARLY ON THE NATIONAL LEVEL. BANGEMANN, DESPITE EFFORTS TO DEFUSE ANYTHING CONTROVERSIAL HE MIGHT SAY TO FURTHER ALIENATE HIS FDP AND SPD COLLEAGUES, SEEMS UNABLE TO PUT MUCH DISTANCE BETWEEN HIMSELF AND CONTINUED SPECULATION ABOUT THE FDP'S FUTURE POLITICAL COURSE. JENKINS

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